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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer.

Let us pray.

Be exalted, God of peace and love above the heavens. Let Your glory fill the Earth, for You are holy.

Thank You for the gift of today, for borrowed heartbeats. Give us pure hearts, so we may see you clearly. With the eyes of faith, empower us to accomplish Your purposes.

Make us bold in our striving to help the lost, the lonely, and the least. Inspire our Senators as they labor for liberty. Keep their feet on the right path. Give them the courage to refuse to deviate from integrity and the determination to do Your will.

Remind us that You will never leave us even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Take from us the worries which distract us and give us more trust.

We pray in Your holy Name.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, we will begin today's session with a period of morning business for up to 1 hour. At the conclusion of morning business,

we will begin consideration of S. 852, the asbestos legislation. Last night, we were able to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the asbestos bill. The order last night allows us to proceed to the bill for debate only. Even though amendments will not be in order today, the majority leader hopes we will use the time today constructively and Members will come to the floor to talk on the bill or their submitted amendments.

We expect to move this bill forward this week by making progress on amendments. There is plenty of time this week to consider amendments and vote on various proposals. Having said that, a number of colleagues have asked about Friday. The leader reminds everybody that Friday will be a working day and Senators can expect rollcall votes.

In addition to this bill, we have other issues to consider, including executive nominations that have yet to clear the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ASBESTOS VICTIMS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as of this morning, 2,262 American soldiers have died in Iraq and 17,000, 18,000 have been injured, wounded; over 16,000 have been wounded so seriously that they could not return to battle. Each of these deaths and every one of these individuals who have been wounded, many of whom have been maimed, is a national tragedy. Yesterday, I was speaking to one of my friends with whom I came to Washington in 1982. We keep in touch with each other. He now lives in Santa Rosa, CA. He said, "Harry, you know, we just lost our sixth soldier in this little community."

I have attended funerals of Nevada servicemen who have been killed. I

want to make sure we do everything we can so that fewer of our loyal, patriotic men and women are not killed in Iraq. I want to make sure they have all the equipment—anything they need.

As we speak, there are other tragedies in America, one of which deals with the legislation that is on the floor today. This year, 2006, 10,000 people will die from asbestos-related diseases. That is the case every year. These people did nothing wrong. They were simply exposed to a substance that corporate America knew would make them sick and cause them to die. But because of corporate America's willingness to exchange the lives of these men and women, they went ahead and did this. People were exposed to this at work, at home by hugging their father or husband when he came home from work, or in a schoolyard where asbestos equipment was, in their neighborhoods, in trucks hauling this substance all over America, and people got sick. They die painful, slow, horrible deaths. So there is a debate going on today dealing with asbestos.

This is not a fair bill. Look, I believe we need legislation to compensate the victims, but this is not it. I have said—and I don't have the experience in the legislature of the President pro tempore, but I have been in legislative bodies a long time; more than 30 years I have served in legislatures. This is the worst piece of legislation I have ever seen in the 30-plus years I have been serving in legislatures.

I don't doubt how hard Senator SPECTER has worked and how badly he wants this done, but that doesn't make the legislation good; it is bad. Perhaps because he has tried so hard, he doesn't see the trees for the forest, as they say.

To show the strength of corporate America, 13 companies that will benefit greatly from this legislation have paid lobbyists, within a 2-year period of time, \$144.5 million. That should send a message to everyone. This legislation is not good for asbestos victims. It

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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